

back-to-school

UPDATE

STATE SENATOR 13th District

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Let's invest in our kids

One of my commitments to the families of the 13th district is to make sure education remains a top priority in the state budget.

I am happy to report the Senate finalized the K-12 budget earlier this summer with a modest hike in school funding.

Public Act 110 of 2010 (Senate Bill 1183) increases school funding \$40 million over two years and increases pre-school and ISD funding.

That's a significant step at a time when virtually all state programs are being cut, many dramatically, to balance at least a \$1.4 billion budget shortfall.

In addition, I've been fighting to restore 20j funding for "hold harmless" schools. I was successful in adding an amendment to the School Aid budget that would restore \$26 million to 20j districts with another \$26 million going to every school district using a specified formula. The funding would be contingent on the creation of a new tax amnesty program.

Both the Senate and the House approved my amendment in the final version of the School Aid budget. Unfortunately, the governor once again exercised her veto authority to eliminate 20j funding.



Reforms will help schools save money

In Michigan's tough economy, every dollar has to work harder.

That's why I support sensible reforms to help Michigan schools balance their budgets and keep more funds in the classroom. Legislation includes:

- ✓ Public Acts 75 and 77 of 2010 - provide an incentive for eligible school employees to retire, and reform the retirement system by requiring school employees to contribute 3 percent of salary into a funding account. Savings are estimated at \$515 million next year and a whopping \$3.1 billion over the next 10 years.
- ✓ Senate Bill 1073 - limits administrative costs to 28 percent of the school budget. Savings are estimated at \$163 million statewide.
- ✓ Senate Bill 1074 - requires public schools to competitively bid custodial and food support services at a projected savings of \$200 million statewide. I sponsored this bill after learning that Troy Community Schools expects to save more than \$3 million a year in competitive contracting!



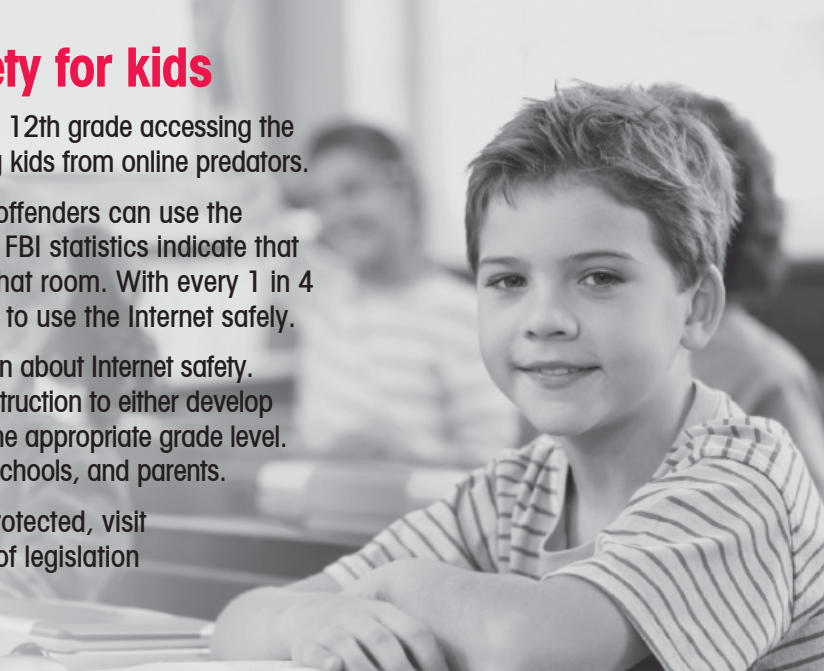
Pappageorge promotes Internet safety for kids

With an estimated 35 million children from kindergarten through the 12th grade accessing the Internet, it is more important than ever to enact measures protecting kids from online predators.

Unfortunately, it is an unpleasant truth that criminals such as sex offenders can use the Internet to manipulate and lure children into dangerous situations. FBI statistics indicate that your child has a 100 percent chance of meeting a predator in a chat room. With every 1 in 4 kids participating in real-time chat, it is critical that they learn how to use the Internet safely.

Currently, I am working on legislation to help teach our schoolchildren about Internet safety. A bill I sponsored would require the state superintendent of public instruction to either develop or adopt a program designed to teach Internet safety to children at the appropriate grade level. The programs would be made available to all public and nonpublic schools, and parents.

For information on what you can do to ensure your children are protected, visit www.enough.org. I look forward to working on this crucial piece of legislation with my colleagues and seeing the governor sign it into law.



Senate lesson plan: STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT!

Here's a look at a couple of bills introduced in the Senate to help our kids succeed:

- Public Act 80 of 2010 (Senate Bill 757) gives seventh-grade students the opportunity to create an educational development plan and review it before they enter high school. The idea is to help students make sure their coursework is on track with their career exploration goals.

The new law also allows students to take a statistics, or a functions and data analysis class instead of the currently required Algebra II course.

- Senate Bill 1284 would help struggling students in low-performing schools. The legislation encourages early intervention to make sure kids can read and do math at grade level.



Pappageorge supports school election consolidation

Every dollar for schools should go to educating our kids.

I supported Senate Bills 751-756 to keep more funds in the classroom by holding school elections on regularly scheduled August or November election dates.

Currently, most schools hold school board elections in May and voter turnout is usually below 10 percent. As board elections are often the only item on the ballot, school districts must pay the entire cost.

About 110 of roughly 600 Michigan school districts have voluntarily moved their elections to August or November as a cost-saving measure. Consolidating school board elections would save schools and taxpayers more than \$2 million and ensure better turnout.

Pappageorge bill establishes back-to-school tax holiday

It's that time of year again when children all around Michigan are returning to the classroom – which means parents will be spending a significant amount of money on new clothes and other items for school. To provide relief to families across the state facing economic hardships, I have sponsored a measure to help them better afford back-to-school supplies.

My legislation would bring tax relief to state residents by establishing a "back-to-school tax holiday." Michigan would be joining a host of other states that already have such holidays, when sales taxes are lifted for a few days on supplies.

Senate Bill 75 would establish a Michigan back-to-school tax holiday during the first 15 days of September and include sales tax relief up to \$150 on clothing, and an additional tax break on school supplies up to \$50.

This bill would help alleviate some of the burden parents face in preparing their children for school while serving as an economic boost for retailers.

